Ceiling on land for multi-purpose SEZs

1659. SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the details of reasons for Government to fix the 5000 hectares of cultivable lands as land ceiling for multi-purpose SEZs; and

(b) the justification for setting such ceiling of cultivable land for the SEZs?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) and (b) The Special Economic Zones (SEZ) Act, 2005 and SEZ rules, 2006 prescribed only the minimum area criteria for various types of Special Economic Zones, including for multi product SEZs. The Empowered Group of Ministers (EGOM) at its meeting held on 5th April, 2007 after considering various issues related to the SEZs had fixed the upper limit of the area required for multi- product SEZs at 5000 hectares. Pursuant to this decision, the SEZ Rules, 2006 has been amended on 12th October 2007.

Tax exemption for infrastructure development in SEZs

1660. SHRI MAHENDRA MOHAN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Commerce Ministry is working on rules to provide tax exemption to sub-contractor for developing infrastructure in the Special Economic Zones (SEZs);

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is also a fact that this move goes contrary to the Finance Bill, 2007, which proposes limiting tax concession to only developers; and

(d) if so, the reasons therefore?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) to (d) The Special Economic Zones (SEZs) Act 2005 provides for tax exemptions to the Developers including co-developers for developing infrastructure in the SEZs . However, the SEZ Rules, 2006 provides that the said exemption can also be availed on their behalf by their contractor subject to fulfillment of the prescribed conditions.

Strength of sepoys in Army

1661. SHRI VARINDER SINGH BAJWA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of the posts of sepoys in the Army as on 30th November, 2007 both sanctioned and actually in place;

(b) the reasons for the gap in case that is more than five per cent of the sanctioned strength; and